



LegisLetter

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Volume Twelve / Number Eight • March 11, 2002

Will they or won't they? That's the question on everyone's mind these last few weeks of the regular session. Will they finish the budget and reapportionment with two weeks remaining, or will they "sine die" and go home with unfinished business left on the table, only to return again soon? Time will tell.

State economists announced on Friday a \$644 million boost in state revenues to plug into this year's budget allocations, which may get the stalled budget process moving again (**see related story**).

The education governance bills are creeping along. Last week, the House Life Long Learning Council deliberated on 64 amendments to their 1,100 page bill. The substance of **Representative Loranne Ausley's** state employee fee waiver legislation, amended onto this bill, is the only amendment of interest to the university system to pass. Her state employee language requires universities to accept state employees, but excludes university employees, on a space available basis for six credit hours. There is no funding attached to the language but it does allow employees the choice between enrollment at a community college or a university. The full House will hear the bill on Friday when more amendments are expected. Meanwhile, the Senate governance bill will be heard in the Governmental Oversight and Productivity Committee tonight.

FSU Day at the Capitol was a hit! Thank you to our Trustees, Foundation Board members, administrators and students for participating, and contributing to its successful outcome. The Capitol was covered with FSU colors and pride.

Our Board of Trustees members have been approved by two Senate committees and are awaiting final confirmation by the full Senate. The Senate Education Committee is expected to confirm Mr. Andy Haggard, our newest Trustee, tomorrow.

As always, I continue to welcome your comments, questions and input during these last weeks of the regular session. I can be reached at **(850) 644-4453** or by e-mail at **kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu**.

Kathleen

State Revenues Bolstered

Confirming the economy is on the upswing, state economists predicted on Friday that Florida would collect an additional \$644 million in state revenues through the end of this fiscal year. Plus, Lt. Governor Frank Brogan said he would like to see some of the dollars go toward education. This has to be good news for legislators in charge of the stalled state budget.

Last week, the House passed a budget that funds new enrollment growth at 42 percent of the system average, provides \$23 million in discretionary funding, fully funds the FSU medical school roll-out request but provides no additional dollars for the matching gifts program. The Senate is still planning to debate its spending plan, which is built around tax reform, an issue that the House has said it will not debate further.

The budget is the only bill the Legislature must pass prior to the start of the new fiscal year in July. It must "cool" for 72 hours after the conference report is completed before a final vote can be taken. With just two weeks left in the regular session, much work is left to do if legislators hope to conclude on time.

Trustee Confirmation

The Board of Trustees' members were confirmed earlier this week by the Senate Ethics and Elections Committee. They will be scheduled for final confirmation by the full Senate sometime in the next couple of weeks. Our newest Trustee, Andy Haggard, will be confirmed by the Senate Education Committee on Tuesday, March 12.

Spotlight on Bills

CS/HB 65, Relatives/Employment/School Board by the Committee on Education Innovation, removes an exemption currently in law prohibiting public school officials, including those at universities and community colleges, from hiring a relative of an employee. The bill was passed unanimously by the Council for Lifelong Learning and is now on the House calendar. A similar Senate bill, **SB 708 by Senator Les Miller (D-Tampa)**, was introduced but not heard by committee.

HB 765, Legislature Passage of Bills by Representative Johnnie Byrd (R-Plant City), is a constitutional amendment requiring a 48-hour cooling off period for any bill or resolution before final passage. This is an effort to allow legislators and the public the opportunity to review a bill or resolution in its final form before adopting it. The bill passed out of the House unanimously last week. A similar Senate bill, **SB 1252 by Senator Durell Peaden (R-Crestview)** has been introduced but not heard by committee.

CS/HB 747, Student financial Assistance by College sand Universities, allows part-time students to

receive a Florida Public Student Assistance Grant as long as the student is enrolled for a minimum of 6 semester hours as a degree seeking student. The bill is now on the House calendar. An identical Senate bill, **SB 1914 by Senator Ron Klein (D-Delray Beach)**, passed out of the Senate last week and will now go to the House.

HB 1965, State Vehicles/Use and Cost by the Fiscal Responsibility Council, was unanimously passed the House last week. The bill sets a usage limit of 30-miles per work day for state vehicles, requires the employee to pay 8 cents per mile for any mileage accumulated over the limit, and requires an annual review of state vehicle use by the agency's auditor general.

SB 1588, Public Records, Social Security Numbers by Senator Burt (R-Ormond Beach) creates exemptions from public records for all social security numbers held by an agency or its employees and restricts release of these numbers held by an agency. The bill is now in the Senate Rules and Calendar Committee. The companion bill, **HB 1673 by Representative Brummer (R-Apopka)**, is pending on the House calendar.

SESSION SCHEDULE

SENATE

Wednesday, March 13

9:00 a.m. – 12 Noon
1:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 14

9:00 a.m. – 12 Noon
1:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Friday, March 15

9:00 a.m. – 12 Noon
1:00 – 6:00 p.m.

HOUSE

Monday, March 11

2:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 12

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon
1:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, March 13

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon
1:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 14

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon
1:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Friday, March 15

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon
1:30 – 5:00 p.m.

CS/HB 1241, Education & Training/State Employees by Representative Lorraine Ausley (D-Tallahassee) granting tuition waivers for non-university state employees passed the House last week. The Senate companion, **SB 1356 by Senator Lawson (D-Tallahassee)**, is on the Senate Education Committee agenda for Tuesday, March 12, 2002. The substance of Rep. Ausley's bill was also amended into the education governance bill last week in a house committee.